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Report
of
The President
to the
Trustees of Trinity College



October 1, 1924

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October 1, 1931

REPORT OF PRESIDENT R. B. OGILBY TO THE TRUSTEES OF TRINITY COLLEGE

The subject which occupied most of the attention of the Administration and the Faculty of the college during the last academic year was the number of our students. The year opened with the college full to its present capacity, just over two hundred and fifty, but the mortality of the Freshmen class at mid-years was high. By the middle of the year our numbers were much reduced. This caused some concern. In view of the desire of the alumni, the Trustees and the Faculty to see the college grow to perhaps four or five hundred students, definite action was indicated. During the spring a considerable effort was made to insure a large entering class in the fall in order that our enrollment might at least be kept up and perhaps increased. Plans were undertaken to make known the opportunities at Trinity College among the secondary schools, especially in the High Schools in the State of Connecticut. In addition to that, steps were taken to make sure that the students who came to us should be properly prepared and should then be given every opportunity to do their best work in their studies so that they might stay with us. The result of all these efforts was fairly successful but not so much so as was hoped.

No record was kept of the total number of those who applied for admission to the Freshman class this fall, largely because it is difficult to define what constitutes an application. The statements made in the daily press and elsewhere about the large number of students turned away from the Freshman classes at one college or another must always be taken with a grain of salt. The Registrar of Trinity College, who has had a wide experience in the field of college admission, says that he has yet to learn of a genuine case of a student properly prepared being turned away from a college of good standing. The Freshman class admitted this year at Trinity represents then the number selected by the ordinary processes of elimination due to our entrance standards. The Registrar and the President agree that something like four hundred names came to us in one way or another, from which number the present Freshman class of eighty-eight resulted. We should have been glad to take in more men had they come to us properly prepared, but we feel reasonably certain that those whom we have taken in have a good chance of continuing at college. In all one hundred and twenty-three new students were admitted.

All new students were given the Thorndike Psychological Examination before entering college. This was not used as a process of elimination. It proved to be a useful supplement to the information already secured about applicants by the result of examinations or by reports of their school records. The rank of the new students who took this test was not only well above last year's Freshman class but compares favorably with the reports of the Freshman classes at other colleges where the same test was given.

It is distinctly understood by the Faculty that our use of the psychological examinations is experimental. There is a large amount of material already available from the experience of other colleges in regard to these tests, but collegiate institutions are naturally very slow in basing administrative action or curriculum changes upon a contribution to education which is still in its laboratory stage. We at Trinity are naturally not equipped to conduct independent study of value to the college world in general, but we are trying to keep in touch with this exceedingly important phase of educational development. If it is going to be possible to predict in any measure at the beginning of a man's college course what kind of work he should do in his Junior and Senior years, such knowledge is obviously of great value.

Having admitted these new students the next problem is to make sure that they have no undue handicaps in beginning their college career. This year for the first time the Freshmen are rooming together in Northam Towers and in the top floors of Middle Jarvis. The undergraduate customs of introducing Freshmen to college life in the past have always had a deleterious effect upon scholarship. These have been in some measure abandoned. There is a general feeling throughout the Faculty that this year's Freshman class have started their college work under much better conditions than previous Freshman classes. We do not anticipate the high mortality of last year. If we are not forced to drop a large number and continue to admit a class of the same size or larger each year, the college will grow normally. We are starting this year with two hundred and sixty-seven students on our rolls, a few more than last year and about our comfortable capacity.

It will not be possible for us definitely to increase our numbers until we get a new chemical laboratory. The resources of the Chemistry Department are at present strained to the utmost, and even at that we are not meeting the situation. A new laboratory building would not only permit the Chemistry Department to do its work well and give opportunity for many at present denied the privilege of studying Chemistry, but also would relieve

pressure elsewhere by making the present quarters of the Chemistry Department available for other purposes. This would release sufficient space for teaching purposes in other departments of the college.

The record of our students in graduate schools continues high especially in the cases of men whom we have prepared for medical schools. All of last year's Seniors who wished to study medicine were admitted to the various schools on their records at Trinity, to our great satisfaction. Last June there were eleven honors awarded at the Yale Medical School in New Haven. Four of these honors went to Trinity men, a good proportion. Good records were also achieved by our students doing graduate work at Cambridge and elsewhere. The President desires to call the attention of the Trustees to the work of Herman Immeln, who graduated from Trinity College in 1923 and was appointed by the Faculty Terry Fellow, to do graduate work at Cambridge. He got his Master's degree in the Harvard Graduate School in one year, with marks of three A's and one B, although he is handicapped by being totally blind. This is a record of which Trinity College is proud.

This year the load of certain professors has been lightened by the addition of various instructors. In the History Department and the German Department new instructors have been added, and in the Philosophy Department we have the advantage of the services of Professor Wells, of the Hartford Theological Seminary, who is giving half time work in Psychology.

Professor Barret of the Latin Department is away on leave of absence and his place is being well filled by Mr. G. M. Harper, Jr., of Princeton University. We have been able to make exceedingly satisfactory arrangements to fill the gaps caused by the absence of Doctor Swan. Doctor R. W. Storrs, one of our own graduates, is taking care of the teaching done by Doctor Swan, and Doctor John A. Wentworth of Hartford has been appointed the college physician. At the beginning of the year Doctor Wentworth, with the assistance of fourteen physicians and surgeons of Hartford, gave all the new students a thorough physical examination. It is gratifying to the college to find busy professional men ready to give a day without recompense to this service. It will mean much to our care for the physical welfare of our students to have this careful examination by specialists given every year.

In the Department of Physical Training three new men are functioning and seem qualified to do the work well. This fall outdoor sports for everybody has been the goal. In addition to

the varsity football, a Freshman squad of twenty-five men has been practicing regularly with one of the instructors in Physical Training as duly appointed coach. There has also been regular track work and a fall baseball series.

For a long time it has been obvious that we need increased facilities for the proper care of the physical welfare of our students. There has been talk of a new gymnasium for years. This fall the President has met with a group of graduates to put before them the proposal that we must break ground in the spring for the beginning of a gymnasium. Plans are being drawn for the first unit, to consist of a swimming pool and squash courts. This will give us an opportunity for indoor exercises during the winter months which would be of great value and in addition would have a distinct affect upon the morale of the student body. It is high time that we began to build.

The rest of our building problem must be carefully worked out. No decision has been made as to the exact location of the proposed gymnasium and of the much desired chemical laboratory. Last year when the President consulted with the architects, Trowbridge and Livingston, about our new buildings they felt that no plans should be made for any buildings until a study was made of our heating plant and a decision made as to whether we were going to continue heating the college as it is done at present. We are now burning in independent plants anthracite coal bought at retail prices. This seems about the most expensive method of heating.

In general the plant is in good condition. Last spring we declared a holiday for "Campus Day". Faculty and students combined to put in a day's work in cleaning up and beautifying our property with some success. Through the gift of a generous benefactor all the trees were put in first class condition, something we have needed for a long time. The wooden staircases in Northam Towers constitute a serious fire hazard, located as the building is immediately above the boiler room. This is a vital matter. I recommend that estimates be secured immediately for making the stairs in Northam Towers fireproof.

Plans are under consideration for remodeling the Ferguson house so that it can be used as a residence by two member of the Faculty. In view of the fact that the Trustees have voted that married professors now living in the dormitories must move out at the end of the present academic year, due attention should be paid to the problem of housing our teaching staff.

During the last few months the Faculty have considered the demands made upon us for extension courses for the teachers in

and near Hartford. We have an arrangement with Hillyer Institute by which courses given there may be counted under certain conditions towards a Trinity College degree. These courses are all elementary, however, and meet the problems of ambitious men who are working in factories and offices in Hartford. The instruction at Hillyer Institute is not too well done and the college is not meeting its responsibility to the community in the way of extension work. For a long time we have had requests made us for courses in advanced subjects by the teachers of Hartford. The Faculty are planning to put before the Trustees a suggested outline by which we can meet this need. If properly worked out, it should help the people of the city of Hartford to realize that the college is serving them in every way possible.

It has been a source of satisfaction to the Trustees as well as to the friends of the college that the last fiscal year closed with a small balance on the right side. During the four years that I have been President, the running expenses of the college have increased about 50%, due largely to increases in the salaries of our teaching staff. Our endowment has made that possible upon a solid financial foundation. Over a million dollars in gifts for endowment has been received during those four years. The thorough audit made of the finances of the college this year seems to show that our accounts are in excellent condition and the report of the auditor reflects credit upon the Finance Committee and the Treasurer.

In the last few years the college has lost some valuable Trustees. Ambrose Spencer Murray was a loyal member of the Board. Frederick Haight, formerly a Trustee, died at Commencement time last year. He was second to none in his love to the college and carried a heavy burden at a time when his services meant much. There are two vacancies now on the Board and it is to be hoped that the new Trustees will show devotion equal to their predecessors. If so, the future of the college is assured.

The loss of William E. Curtis is still felt by us at every turn. Next June is the fiftieth anniversary of his graduation. His class are making a special effort for a reunion at that time and are asking the classes of 1872, 1873, 1874, 1876, 1877 and 1878, who were with them in college, to join in this reunion. They feel that the central feature of that reunion should be honor to the memory of Mr. Curtis. It is to be hoped that the Trustees will cooperate in every way with this desire of Mr. Curtis' classmates.